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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Greek (1GK0) Paper 2H: Speaking

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Introduction

This was the first year of the new specification and there were many changes in the content and the demand of the examination.

The new speaking examination for the Higher tier consists of three parts: a role play with 5 prompts and a maximum of 10 marks, a picture-based task with five prompts and a maximum of 24 marks and a conversation of two topic areas and a maximum of 36 marks. There are 10 Higher role plays and 10 Higher picture-based cards. There is also a sequencing grid that centres are asked to follow when deciding which student receives which role play, which picture-based card and the theme for the second conversation. Following the sequencing grid is very important, as it ensures that the student is tested in four out of five themes of the specification and it avoids duplication. The students have 12 minutes' preparation time to read through the role play and the picture-based card. In the Higher role play card usually the third prompt has an unpredictable question which refers to the past and the student is expected to use a past reference and usually the last two prompts require the student to ask two questions. The first task for each picture-based card is a description of the photo, the third task requires a response within a past time frame and the fourth task requires a future time frame. For the Foundation and Higher role plays and picture-based tasks teachers are not allowed to rephrase questions. The questions may be repeated, but no more than twice, so overall the students may hear each question up to three times. In the picture-based tasks prompts 'Τίποτ' άλλο;' and/or 'Γιατί;' have been provided to enable students to develop their answers. Only these prompts may be used and there must be no other supplementary questions by the teacher.

The timing for the Higher speaking examination is 10-12 minutes. This is only a guideline for the role play and picture-based tasks and it does not mean that the three tasks cannot be completed successfully in a shorter time. However, timings for the conversation tasks are prescribed and should be 5 - 6 minutes for the Higher tier and teachers should not extend conversation times to reach the total time of the complete examination. Any response started after 6 min will not be given credit. An equal amount of time should be allocated to both parts of the conversation. If the first conversation is a monologue without questions and answers the mark for Interaction and Spontaneity is capped at 6.

Overview

Even though this was the first time the new specification was assessed and many changes were introduced, the examination team was pleased to report that there were some very good performances and that most students were well prepared and achieved marks in the upper band.

Task 1: Role play

It is worth mentioning that the role play task is marked for communication only, unlike the picture-based task and the conversation. Answers should

be brief and to the point to avoid confusion and ambiguity. It is very important that students read the scenario carefully during the preparation time in order to understand where the role play is situated and what is expected of them. Crucially, the teacher conducting the test should read out the small introduction in Greek before asking the questions. A few teachers failed to do so and that created an initial confusion. Also, there were some teachers who omitted one of the questions or rephrased one of the questions and as a result they disadvantaged the students. The teachers are reminded that any supplementary questions do not get any credit and often confuse the students affecting their performance. Most importantly, it is not acceptable to say 'Θέλετε να με ρωτήσετε κάτι?' or 'Πρέπει να κάνεις μια ερώτηση τώρα' before the student needs to ask a question, as any response after that gets no credit. Many students were successful with the unpredictable question and with the formation of a question for Q4 and Q5 of the role play. Some students were less successful in framing a question and lost marks due to poor pronunciation or by repeating the prompts in the student card.

Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles agreed across all modern languages:

- If a teacher changes a question or inserts a supplementary question, there can be no credit for a response made by the student.
- Where a student has offered an incorrect response to a question, the teacher may not repeat the question. If the teacher does so and the student then gives a correct response, this is ignored.
- Teachers may repeat each question twice but may not rephrase any of the questions.

HR1

Most students found this role play easy to answer especially the first two questions.

3. Most students explained briefly and successfully what they think of 'υγιεινή διατροφή'.

4. Framing a question about take-away meals ('φαγητό σε πακέτο') was less successful, as some students confused it with eating out.

5. Some students concentrated asking if there was a restaurant nearby omitting 'ελληνικό'. Also, some students were unfamiliar with 'απόσταση'.

HR2

This proved accessible for this tier and students responded naturally, whether they had to answer or ask questions.

1. Very few students were confused and said when they would like to leave the party and not what time they wanted to leave for the party.
2. Most students understood the word 'τοποθεσία' and framed the question successfully by simply asking 'Πού είναι το πάρτι;'
4. Most students were able to give different options for the best present but omitted 'γιατί'.

HR3

2. Some students did not realise that the question referred to the past.
3. Many students were able to say what they like doing on holiday in the evenings, but some omitted the reason only partially communicating what was required.
4. The word 'ξεναγωγή' was not known by less successful students.

HR4

Most students performed well and naturally.

4. Some less successful students did not know 'ώρες λειτουργίας' and were confused as to what to ask.

HR5

Many students found this transactional role play accessible and performed very well in most questions.

2. Many students misunderstood the question and only partially communicated what was required because the question was 'Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας για το μπάσκετ στην Ελλάδα;'; and they gave their opinion on basketball in general.

HR6

This role play was often challenging mainly because students did not understand the scenario, especially students who had lived in Greece and had gone to school there.

1. Some students were confused as to whether they should describe their English school or their Greek school and some even asked the teacher 'Το σχολείο στην Ελλάδα?'
2. Less successful students did not know what 'προγράμματα ανταλλαγής' were.

3. Many students answered about what they used to do 'στο σχολείο', i.e. when they lived in Greece, not what they have done 'με το σχολείο' on the trip.
4. Some students had some difficulty with 'κανόνες'. Often the question they asked was 'Σου αρέσει η στολή;'
5. Some students ignored the word 'σημασία' in the prompt and they simply asked 'Σου αρέσουν οι ξένες γλώσσες;'

HR7

This role play was handled well by most students.

4. Some students omitted 'στο εξωτερικό' partially communicating what was required and simply asked about school trips in general.
5. Similarly, some less successful students ignored 'διάρκεια' and asked 'Πού θα πάς διακοπές το καλοκαίρι;'

HR8

1. Many students were able to say that they wanted to work at the campsite but they ignored 'είδος' and didn't say what type of job they wanted to do.
3. Many students said where they had worked in the past but did not explain what they had done.
5. The prompt 'κοντινή πόλη – μεταφορικό μέσο' was challenging for some who lost marks either for mispronouncing 'κοντινή' or for not knowing 'μεταφορικό μέσο'.

HR9

Most students handled well this transactional role play and the discussion was natural.

2. Many students handled the unpredictable question very well and a variety of reasons was offered.

HR10

3. Some students talked about any work experience they had, not specifically voluntary.

Task 2: Picture-based

The Higher tier students often offered detailed photo descriptions concentrating not only on the physical characteristics and the clothes of the people in the photos but on their feelings and their surroundings. They went further, explaining what they believed was happening in the photo and used expressions such as '(Μου) φαίνεται ότι ...', 'Πιστεύω ότι...', 'Θα έλεγα ότι δείχνουν...' to enhance the task. 'Φαίνονται/Δείχνουν χαρούμενοι, επειδή χαμογελούν στην κάμερα' was an indication where a student could use the picture to give an opinion or make a deduction.

At Higher tier, there was a wide range of marks awarded and this was because there was an uneven level of response across the task. Some students were able to give very good descriptions of the photo and offered very good opinions with some justification in question two but were less expansive in the response to questions three and four when dealing with events in the past and the future. The most successful students were able to relate past and future events with minimal prompting and there was little hesitancy within the responses. These questions proved to be good differentiators within the mark scheme. The most able students were able to use different time frames appropriately throughout the whole of their response. Less confident students used mainly the present tense and some attempts to use past reference were unsuccessful and led to some ambiguity.

In some cases students were allowed to 'ramble on' when an acceptable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said. Examiners are looking for the quality of the response rather than the length. It is counter-productive to go through the supplementary prompts when a perfectly good response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence does not help the student and it often affects their performance towards the end of the task.

Centres are reminded that the questions within the picture-based discussion are set and they should not be altered in any way. Unfortunately, there were instances where teachers reworded or reframed questions or added extra prompts which did not allow students to be credited for responses to these questions. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit could be given for these responses and the practice caused confusion for these students who had prepared responses to the five bullet points.

Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles agreed across all modern languages:

- Students must refer to the visual image in response to the first question.
- Where a teacher changes a question or changes the prompts ('Γιατί (όχι);' and 'Τίποτ' άλλο;') or inserts a supplementary question which is not scripted, there can be no credit for a response made by the student.

- Teachers may repeat each question twice but may not rephrase any of the questions.

HP1

This card proved accessible to most students who were able to talk about family celebrations and offer clear opinions with justification on the importance of family to them. Responses to questions 3 and 4 were straightforward and a significant number of students used past and future references. Question 5 was also well developed with many students explaining why they preferred to go on holiday with their family or their friends.

HP2

Parts of this picture-based card proved accessible to most students who managed to describe the photo successfully and talked about a book that made an impression to them using past references. Responses to questions 2, 4 and 5 were less straightforward and some students did not expand sufficiently offering clear justification.

HP3

This was a popular card and many students were able to describe the photo well, more specifically the people, the surroundings and why they thought the people in the photo were at the front of the White Tower in Thessaloniki. Most students were able to give an opinion and agree or disagree with the statement in question 2 offering a sufficient justification. Less successful students gave a very brief description and in question 3 instead of describing what happened (‘τι συνέβη’) when they had to use a foreign language they simply stated when and where they used it.

HP4

Some students found this card challenging and beyond a simple description of the photo in question 1 they did not expand to include comments on transport and traffic. Less successful students found the words ‘ποδηλατόδρομοι’ and ‘συγκοινωνία’ challenging and gave irrelevant answers. However, many successful students agreed that cycle lanes were a good idea and justified their opinion sufficiently. Responses to questions 3 and 4 were varied and often brief. Finally, mostly successful students were able to give a justified opinion on electric cars.

HP5

Students performed well on this task. The vocabulary was used well to discuss reasons why PE is an important school subject and it was clear that they were comfortable with this topic. Students were able to talk about a positive or a negative experience involving sport at school and they often used future reference to say what they will do to stay fit in the future. The unpredictable question was handled successfully by most students who agreed that team sports are very important and offered a variety of reasons why.

HP6

This was a very popular card and many students were successful in describing the photo well. Some students even went beyond the description of the general characteristics of the people in the photo and talked about the people's feelings stating that 'Φαίνονται χαρούμενοι, γιατί χαμογελάνε' or made deductions such as 'Κρατάνε βιβλία και φαίνεται ότι μάλλον τελείωσαν τις εξετάσεις τους' or made comments on their different ethnicities 'Κατάγονται από διαφορετικές χώρες' clearly linking the photo description with the remaining questions in the card. Most students could relate to the theme and answered the questions confidently. Some students in question 3 though said how they would like to help a new pupil, not how they have helped.

HP7

This was one of the most challenging cards either because some students were unfamiliar with 'εθελοντισμός' or 'εθελοντής/εθελόντρια' or because due to their young age they could not relate with the topic of volunteering. Most students gave a short description of the photo stating the obvious, i.e. two people serving food in a kitchen and mostly successful students commented that these people were volunteers serving food to homeless/poor people. Less successful students talked about a job they did in the past not voluntary though and were vague when stating where they would like to work as volunteers in the future.

HP8

Some less successful students found this card difficult to describe due to lack of vocabulary related to professions. However, there were some students who managed to overcome this barrier by giving a wider description of all the professions they thought the woman in the photograph was thinking of choosing in the future, e.g. 'δουλειά σε γραφείο' instead of 'γραμματέας' or 'χτίζει σπίτια' instead of 'μηχανικός'. Responses to the questions aiming to elicit opinions were less successful at times whereas

most students were able to say how school helped them to choose which job they would like to do in the future.

HP9

Most students found this card challenging due to the theme (environment) and some lacked the relevant vocabulary to describe the photo and offer opinions on environmental issues in question 2. However, there were some successful students who were able to say how they helped they saved up energy lately in question 3 and what they would change in the daily life to help the environment. The unpredictable question was less well handled, because 'βιολογικά προϊόντα' were not widely known.

HP10

This was one of the most popular cards and a significant number of students answered parts of it successfully. There were mixed performances regarding the photo description and some students failed to go beyond a brief description 'βλέπω μια συναυλία', 'όλοι έχουν τα χέρια τους ψηλά' and that prevented them from accessing the higher mark bands. Similarly, they did not justify their opinions in questions 2 and 5, but simply stated that charity concerts were important and they gave the name of the charity they prefer without elaborating. Some less successful students found the nature of the language within the topic such as 'φιλανθρωπικός σκοπός', 'φιλανθρωπική οργάνωση' challenging and were often hesitant or unable to answer the questions. However, some students were very successful when they talked about a recent charity concert and about a school charity event planned in the future in questions 3 and 4 respectively.

Task 3: Conversations (conversation 1 on a chosen theme and conversation 2 on a theme prescribed by Pearson)

In general, the conversations were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teachers afforded students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling students to achieve their best. Most popular choices for conversation 1 for the Higher tier were: 'Who am I?', 'My holidays' and 'My school'.

It is essential to be careful with the timings and avoid any imbalance between the two conversations or any shortfall or excess in timings. Most teachers put their students at ease, using a friendly tone of voice and spoke clearly and slowly so that the students had little or no problems in understanding the questions. They also covered a variety of sub-topics within a theme, which resulted in a wider variety of language from the students.

For the first Conversation, students should be encouraged to introduce the topic they have chosen for up to one minute prior to the interaction with the teacher. It is equally important to ensure that they are not allowed to go on beyond the 1 minute and teachers should interrupt with their first question if the student seems determined to continue with a monologue.

Unsurprisingly, the first prepared conversation was often more successful than the second and it was noticeable how the less successful students frequently found it difficult to complete their sentences as they struggled to find the right vocabulary, grammatical structures or verb tenses in conversation 2. Some teachers had clearly not been listening carefully to what the students were saying and confused them by asking questions the answers to which had already been covered in the initial presentation. The Conversations should be allowed to develop naturally and the teachers should listen carefully to what the student is saying and build the conversation accordingly.

Some students were disadvantaged because the teacher failed to ask any questions that required the use of a tense other than the present.

Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles that have been agreed across all modern languages:

- Higher Conversations should last for between 5 and 6 minutes
- Timings begin with the student's first utterance.
- Conversations that are too short are likely to be self-penalising.
- Conversations that are too long: once the 5 minutes for Higher tier students have passed, examiners stop listening and assessing at the end of the student's response to the current question.
- An equal amount of time must be allocated to each Conversation.
- Where the first Conversation is a monologue and has no interaction, students will be limited to a maximum score of 6 marks for Interaction and Spontaneity. The marks for Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, however, are unaffected.

Administration

Administrative guidelines were followed by some centres and examiners received the examined CDs/USBs and the relevant paperwork within the timeframe allowed.

- Centres should check that all students have been successfully recorded before dismissing the student from the examination and before submitting their materials. This year some of the recordings were barely audible. It is good practice for centres to retain a copy of students' recordings, in case CDs or memory sticks become damaged or get lost during transit.
- Worryingly this year, an increasing number of centres did not send the correct CS2 form

(<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/French/2016/forms-and-administration/GCSE-MFL-CS2-Form-editable-version.docx>). Each centre should fill in all the details and include the students' and teachers' signatures.

- Centres should send separate CS2 form for each tier.
- Centres should follow the sequencing grid.
- It is very useful if teachers announce the role play card number and the picture card number at the start of the tasks, as well as the theme for each of the Conversations at the beginning of each one.
- Centres are also reminded of the importance of labelling the CDs. Teachers have an important part to play, ensuring that the recording equipment is in good working order; that students are not sitting too far from the microphone; that outside noise is kept to a minimum and that all involved in the conduct of the tests are fully aware of the procedure to be followed. This is essential in the case of students who are not tested in the centre entering them or are examined by a native speaker who is not a teacher at their centre.

Finally, the examining team would like to thank the vast majority of centres and teachers for conducting the exam effectively and according to the instructions of the conduct of the examination, as well as for completing their administration efficiently.